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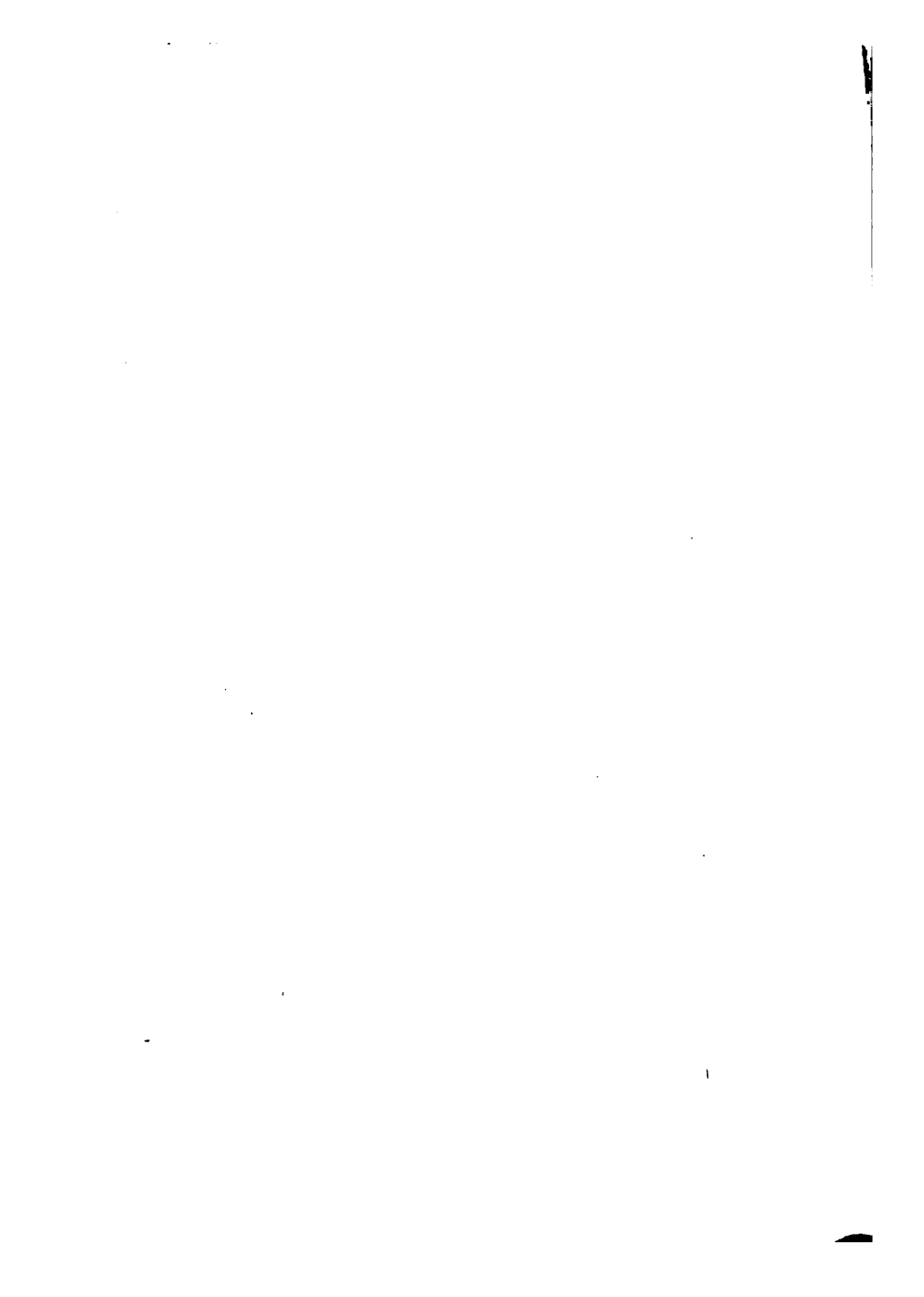
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1

The Epodes of Horace.

THE EPODES OF HORACE

Translated into English Verse

BY

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*"The Iliad of Homer in English Verse," "The Odyssey of Homer
in English Verse," and "The Tragedies of Euripides
in English Verse."*

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PREFACE.

THIS little *parergon*, undertaken to brighten the toil of a few Cheltenham College boys, is published in the thought that it may prove suggestive to some other teachers who want to help their pupils to "enter into the spirit of the author." Haply there are critics who, missing features which old experience has taught them to expect in translations of Horace, and finding some which have not usually profaned so serious a production, will aver that, whatever spirit be there, it is not that of Horace. I would say, in my defence, that this little work is, by reason of the circumstances attending its execution, rather an experiment

in education than an attempt at the unattainable ; and that I seem to have found that the introduction of an occasional touch of modern colour, and the elimination of a little of the " learned allusion " element, tend to give boys a somewhat more living interest in their author, and to remind them that people could once read him without a classical dictionary at their elbow and explanatory notes at the end.

The text of the *Pitt Press* edition has been followed.

INTRODUCTION.

IN the year 40 B.C. Horace, then twenty-five years old, was a struggling treasury clerk at Rome. His poetic talents were just bringing him into notice. It was not only that he was for the first time revealing to Romans that their own language was not an instrument of narrow musical compass, that it was capable of combining the delicate metrical effects of Greek lyric verse with a sonorous majesty all its own, but there was a vigour in his style, a power of personal invective, a literary finish and "rapier-touch," which marked him out as a "first-rate fighting man." As such, he was, as scholars incline to think, at first taken up by the old conservative, or republican, party. They had indeed been decisively beaten in the field; but they might not unreasonably build on the chance of a reaction in popular feeling; and the cleverest satirist of the day was a useful ally. But, having

caught him, they could not keep him. Perhaps they thought—party leaders have been known to make the same mistake since then—that the honour of being their ally was enough for a poor man, and that literature can live on the air of praise. It was not difficult for a great leader on the imperial side to detach him, when that leader was not only a generous patron, but one who treated a literary ally, not as a tool, but as a friend. Mæcenæ won Horace, not for his cause alone, but for himself, in 38 B.C. Three years later he made the poet independent, and, which is more, contented, by the present of the celebrated "Sabine Farm." In 31 B.C., the battle of Actium satisfied Horace on which side Providence was. In the following year he published the Epodes.

On analysing this small collection of seventeen poems, we find that they fall into four groups.

1. *Political*: two (vii and xvi) of the poet's first, or republican, period; and two (i and ix) of the imperial period.

2. *Personal*: iii, xi, xiii, xiv, xv (on himself, his friends, and his loves).

3. *Satirical*: iv (against an upstart); vi, x (against

1. This word is, of course, here used for convenience, by anticipation.

literary opponents); v, xvii (against a "witch"); viii, xii (scurrilous, against an immoral woman).

4. *Idyllic*, with a final touch of satire: ii.

This analysis suggests the thought, which a perusal of the poems somewhat tends to support, that the Epodes are rather a selection of his best, or most representative poems, of that class, than a complete collection of all he had written. The list seems meagre under some heads where we might have expected it to be rather full. The allusions in xi and xiv suggest a somewhat prolific period; and references, such as those in vi, to what the writer has done, or can do, would seem to indicate that the only two examples (vi, x) of his powers in a literary quarrel are preserved rather as specimens, than as comprising all he had written in this manner.¹ Many of the poems he had written during the ten preceding years may well have possessed but passing interest: some personal attacks, which had served their purpose, may not have seemed worthy of a place in a permanent collection: there may have been political poems written years ago on the wrong

1. Book I of the Satires had indeed been published B.C. 35, but the genial, impersonal criticism of these is quite different from the stinging invective of the Epodes.

side, which it would have been embarrassing to republish: many early effusions may well have seemed too immature, too tentative, to be worthy of inclusion in a collection by which a writer was first challenging a place among lyric poets.

With the publication of the Epodes, Horace closed the chapter of his "storm and stress" period, and passed to the serener air of the Odes. Henceforth he was above the atmosphere of personal quarrel and literary squabble. We find indications that the "long-necked geese of the world were hissing dispraise" still; but he now knew that he need not reply, and he could afford to forgive. It may well be that to some, whom he had smitten hard in the days of his Juvenilia, he spared the immortality of flies in amber.

The name *Epode* was not applied to these poems by Horace himself, who called them simply *iambics*. It was invented by later grammarians to designate a style of verse written in couplets, in which a long line was followed by a short one. The latter was called the ἐπὶ ὀδὸς στίχος, or "after-chanted line," and gave its name to the whole poem of which it was the characteristic feature.

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Horace had a well-founded antipathy to garlic. Mæcenas must needs try if he could detect it when cunningly disguised in a dainty dish. The poet's nose and palate betrayed him for once, till it was too late: but the monitor within did not fail in his unwelcome duty.

EPODE IV II

Against a freedman, a *nouveau riche*, name unknown, whose wealth had gained him knighthood and a commission in the army. As he had begun life as a slave, Horace assumes that he had been guilty of the usual vices of the slave-class, and had suffered the usual penalties.

EPODE V 15

Canidia (said to have been Gratidia, a Neapolitan seller of perfumes) is introduced as a witch, compassing the murder of a high-born boy, in order to compound a philtre. The poem opens with the terrified protests of the child when the witches' purpose dawns on him.

EPODE VI 25

A challenge to a "Grub-street" satirist, who assailed only those from whom he had nothing to fear.

EPODE VII 28

A protest against civil war, written either in 41 B.C. when there was fighting in the north of Italy, or in 38 B.C., when a struggle in Sicily began.

EPODE IX 30

Probably written on shipboard on the morning of the day of Actium.

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EPODE X 33

This Maeuius, a poetaster, whose departure from the shores of Italy receives such a cordial "send off," was (with his equally objectionable friend Bavius) the pet aversion of both Horace and Virgil.

EPODE XI 36

Confessions and reminiscences, which help us to understand, as Horace apparently never could, why the objects of his affections were so inconstant.

EPODE XIII 39

An invitation, with which we may compare Milton's Sonnet xx, "Lawrence, of virtuous father virtuous son."

EPODE XIV 41

The Gods not having made Mæcenas poetical, he could not be made to understand that the fount of inspiration is not perennial. Horace, having to find some excuse for what is of Philistines accounted idleness, furnishes that which is most likely to be believed.

EPODE XV 43

To a coquette—perhaps the first of the great enchantresses who (temporarily) changed the bard's wholesome heart to gall, and, in spite of his disdain, did win renown of him. There is ample evidence in the Odes that he tasted, once and again, the sweets of the revenge he here threatens.

EPODE XVI 46

Probably written, like vii, when Horace could see nothing but calamity in civil strife, and had not learnt, as in i and ix, to trust in the star of Octavianus Cæsar.

EPODE XVII 53

Horace feigns himself vanquished by the "witch" he has libelled, but in his recantation he ingeniously repeats, or makes her repeat, all that he ever laid to her charge.

THE EPODES OF HORACE.

I.

WRITTEN *when Mæcenas was on the eve of leaving Rome to join the fleet at Actium. We may infer from Epode xii that he granted the poet's request.*

FRIEND, you will push your galleys
gallant-racing

Where in the fray the foes' sea-castles
tower,

Facing all dangers Cæsar shall be facing,
Ready to share with him the perilous hour.

What shall I do, whose life is crowned with
pleasure 5

So you be spared?—else, 'tis too hard to
bear.

What! as you bid, shall I court peace and
leisure?

Bitter their sweets are, if you be not there!

Or shall I brave this toil and overcome it?

Face it, as fits men of heroic mould? 10

Yea!—for with you I'd scale an Alp's white
summit

Gladly, or Caucasus the stern and cold!

Ay, where the sun sinks in the Western Ocean,
Thither I'd follow you unflinchingly!

Ask you, wherein avails you my devotion?—

I am no soldier trained, no athlete I:— [15

Near you, I shall not be so terror-shaken:

Terror most haunts the absent lover's breast.

So, as she broods above her fledglings, waken

Fears in the bird, lest serpents to her nest

Glide, if she leave them: were they ne'er
forsaken 20

Nought could she aid them, howsoe'er
distressed.

Gladly I'll go to this, to all campaigning
Forth, so to win the love for which I
yearn:—

Not that mine oxen in the yoke-bands
straining [25
May over broader lands the furrows turn;

Not that my flocks may leave parched low-
land valleys,
Seeking the highlands, ere the Dog-star
flame;

Not that by Tusculum may gleam a palace—
Mine, mid grey memories of Circe's name.

More than enough your lavish love has made
me 30
Wealthy. No more of gathering pelf for
me!

What! shall the miser's buried god degrade
me?

What! shall I ape the thriftless debauchee?

II.

A MEDITATION *on the pleasures of a country life, put
into the mouth of a "city man," who soon "thinks
better of it."*

"H, happy is he who, from business
free—

As they lived when the world began—
With his team may toil on the old farm-soil,
And he owes not any man,

Nor is roused from his bed by the war-horn
dread, 5

Nor shudders at raging waves ;
But he shuns the crowd, and the thresholds
proud
Where lords look scorn on slaves.

So the poplar's pride he weds to its bride,
 The blushing-clustered vine ; 10
 And his glad heart swells, as in nestling dells
 He watches the roving kine :

Or he prunes away the barren spray,
 And he grafts the fruitful there ;
 Or his brown jars foam with the gold from
 the comb, 15
 Or the shorn lambs know his care.

Or when, apple-crowned, smiles Autumn round
 On field and flame-touched wood,
 Choice pears from the tree he gathers with glee,
 And the clusters purple-hued— 20

Fair gifts to bring to the Garden-king,
 Or thee, O Landmark-lord !
 Lo, now lies he 'neath the old oak-tree,
 And anon on the velvet sward,

While the streamlet's flow aye murmurs low,
 And the culvers softly coo, [25

And a fountain's spray, heard far away,
Drifts down in slumber-dew.

The Thunder-king to the year may bring
Drear gifts of snow and rain : 30
But the forest resounds with the bay of his
hounds,
And the shout when the boar is slain.

Or he cunningly sets the filmy nets
The thievish thrush to snare ;
And the outland crane in the springe is
ta'en— 35
Rich prize !—or the trembling hare.

No torturing fire of unhallowed desire
Mid these sweet scenes may come,
Let a dear chaste wife but crown my life,
With babes, in the happy home,— 40

A rustic Grace, with a sunburnt face,
Like the bride of a mountaineer,—

To pile up high the faggots dry
When my weary feet draw near,

And to fill white-foaming pails in the gloaming,
And to fold the sheep and the kine, [45
And my board to spread with the unbought
bread
And the sweet new country wine.

No turbot for me, nor the spoil of the sea
That swells the fisherman's store 50
When the wild wind raves o'er the Eastern
waves,
And sweeps the shoals to shore !

Not Afric's pheasant hath flavour pleasant
For me, nor Asia's grouse.
Ah, give me rather the olives I gather 55
From the trees around my house,

And the sorrel that's found in the green
meads round,
And the wholesome pottage of mallows,

Or the kid that I saved when the wolf I
braved,

Or the lamb that the feast-day hallows. 60

So in peaceful bliss o'er fare like this

I watch the sheep stray home,

Or, trailing the plough that's idle now,

The weary oxen come.

And the maids and the men to their supper
then 65

Pass in with cheerful face ;

And in they troop, till a goodly group

Is round the faggots' blaze."

So to settle down, far, far from the town,

He gathered his debts together, 70

On the wing to fly. A week passed by :

He was stock-jobbing harder than ever !

III.

HORACE *had a well-founded antipathy to garlic. Mæcenæ must needs try if he could detect it when cunningly disguised in a dainty dish. The poet's nose and palate betrayed him for once, till it was too late : but the monitor within did not fail in his unwelcome duty.*

IF ever a knave shall help to his grave,
 With a noose, his poor old father,
 I'll condemn him to drink stewed garlic : I
 think
 It is worse than hemlock—rather !

What bowels of brass your reaper has ! 5
 I'm poisoned, as I'm a sinner !
 Was a viper stewed unawares with the food ?
 Has a witch had a hand in the dinner ?

When the Argonauts came, and the Colchian
dame

With love for their captain was full, sir, 10
'Twas with oil of this herb that she rubbed
him—a curb

Strong enough for a fire-breathing bull, sir.
And she smeared this mess on Creusa's dress :
And the smell made her dragon-team pull,
sir !

Such a pestilent stench never steams from a
trench 15

In the fen-land, when dog-days oppress us ;
Nor so badly it burned, when on Hercules
turned
Into flame that mantle of Nessus.

If you harbour again such a trick in your brain,
Maecenas, you practical joker, 20
May your own pretty miss draw back from
your kiss
To the sofa's end, stiff as a poker !

IV.

AGAINST a freedman, a nouveau riche, name unknown, whose wealth had gained him knighthood and a commission in the army. As he had begun life as a slave, Horace assumes that he had been guilty of the usual vices of the slave-class, and had suffered the usual penalties.



AS the enmity betwixt wolves and lambs
by nature fixed,

Is the hate in me, the loathing, you beget—
You, whose back has oft been scored by the
scourge of Spanish cord,

You, whose ankles show the marks of
fetters yet!

Oh, you strut and plume yourself on your
coffers crammed with pelf:

Riches cannot wash your stain of birth away!

Can't you see, man, as you swell and swagger
down the Mall,

As you flaunt your stolen feathers to the day,
How the people that pass by you with indig-
nation eye you?

Can't you feel their scorn and anger as they
say, 10

"Shall a fellow who's been stripped at the
pillory, and whipped

Till the bawling beadle wished that he
were dumb,¹

Shall he store in barn and byre half the har-
vests of a shire?—

Down the Row with flashy tandem driving
come?

Shall he sit among the great and the priv-
ileged in state, 15

And at statutes that forbid it snap his
thumb?

1. The official who stood by and proclaimed the offence
for which punishment was inflicted had to rehearse so long

What's the use of speeding forth hosts of
 iron-clads south and north
 To clear the pests of commerce from the
 wave,
 That sea-robbers should be fought, and slave-
 runaways be caught,
 If he captains us, the robber and the
 slave?"

20

[*Idem Scotiæ redditum*]

As nature's law sets wolf and lamb
 At enmity, an' a' that,
 Ye jail-bird, aye your foe I am,
 Ye whipping-post, an' a' that !
 For a' that, an' a' that,
 Your pride, your pelf, an' a' that,
 Your wealth can't change your puddle
 bluid :
 Sae strut awa', for a' that !

a catalogue of crimes, and so often, in this man's case, that
 he was heartily sick of the whole affair.

Ay, swagger doun the Promenaid

In broadcloth, furs, an' a' that !—

There's not a man but cuts ye dead

In loathing scorn, for a' that :—

“ For a' that, an' a' that,

Broad acres, coach, an' a' that,

We've seen the hangman flog him, till

His airm was tired, for a' that.

And *he* maun tak' the peerage seats,

An' flout the law, an' a' that !

What use to send out armoured fleets

'Gainst buccaneers, an' a' that ?

For a' that, an' a' that—

They're thieves, an' slaves, an' a'
that :

But yon man,—yon, wha leads our
troops,

Is thief an' slave, for a' that !”

V.

CANIDIA (said to have been Gratidia, a Neapolitan seller of perfumes) is introduced as a witch, compassing the murder of a high-born boy, in order to compound a philtre. The poem opens with the terrified protests of the child when the witches' purpose dawns on him.

“H, by all the Gods that, high sitting
throned above the sky,
Bear dominion o'er the earth, the human
race,
What means this fierce attack?—why with
scowling fury black
On me, me only, turned is every face?
In your little children's name,—if the Birth-
queen ever came 5
To aid you in your travail when you cried,—

By this my purple gay, that avails me not,
I pray!—

By Jove, who looketh down indignant-
eyed,

Why like a stepdame glare upon me, or a
bear

That has felt the hunter's javelin in his
side?" 10

While, with lips for fear that quivered, in
their midst he stood, and shivered,

Stripped of toga, stripped of medal, help-
less child,

A tender frame—you might have thought
that such a sight

Would have melted hearts of Thracians
stern and wild,—

Canidia—vipers crawling mid the elf-locks
tangled falling 15

From a head that never once had known
the comb—

Bids them bring the barren fig that from
sepulchres they dig,

Bring the cypresses that grow beside the
tomb,

And the spawn a loathly toad had voided,
smeared with blood,

And the feather of a screech-owl, bird of
gloom, 20

And the herbs of deadly bane from Iolcos
and from Spain

Brought, from lands where only poisons
rankly grow,

And the bone snatched from its jaw ere the
famished hound could gnaw—

All these upon the witch-fires bade she
throw.

But Sagana, with gown girded high, runs up
and down, 25

Sprinkling waters of Avernus on the floor,

With her shaggy head a-bristle like the shell
of some sea-thistle,
Or the back, when he is charging, of a boar.

By no conscience-pang deterred, Veia, by no
pity stirred,

Fell to digging—and she grunted with the
toil— 30

Digging—harder-hearted she than her iron
spade could be—

A burial-pit in that accursèd soil,

Where, from his living grave, his dying gaze
might crave

Food changed and changed throughout the
weary day,

While, as one that swims chin-deep where
the waters round him sweep, 35

The child-face only rose above the clay ;

That the hunger famine-anguished, and the
thirst that burned and languished

Might be mingled in her philtre of desire,

Soon as, yearning on the food aye forbidden,
aye renewed,

In their sockets his eyes shrivelled, as in
fire. 40

Ay, and Folia too was there, the virago, from
her lair

In the city by the Adriatic sea,
As every gossip tells in Neapolis that dwells ;
And all the neighbouring alley-folk agree,
How her incantation-cry drew the planets
from on high, 45
And plucked the moon from heaven im-
piously.

But the savage witch, with brow scowling
rage, is gnawing now,
With those blackened teeth of hers, her
talon-nails ;

And she said—what said she not ?—“ Oh ye
that o’er my lot [50
Rule supreme, whose protection never fails,

O Night, O Hecat, come! thou who rulest
o'er the gloom
When the sacred rites of darkness have
their hour,
Come, be present now at mine! Oh descend
in wrath divine
On my foes, and blast their dwellings by
your power.

While the forest's savage brood yet are lurk-
ing in the wood, 55
While slumber o'er them waves her wings
of down,
Let the dogs with barking greet, as he totters
up our street,
That old debauchee, derision of the town,

While his perfumes load the air—even I, with
all my care,
Cannot make them stronger, sweeter—How
is this? 60

What is wrong? The very charms that were
fell Medea's arms
In the old time, are they working now
amiss?—

The charms that, ere she fled, bowed in dust
the haughty head
Of her rival, who could vaunt a king her sire,
When the bridal-present, steeped in the drugs
of murder, leaped 65
Into flame, and she died a death of fire?

I forgot no flower nor fruit, neither any evil
root
Lurking guiltily in tangled thickets lone:—
Why, the bed on which he sleeps my infernal
unguent steeps
In oblivion of all beauty save my own! 70

Ha, I have it! He's been set free from my
enchantment's net
By the spells of some one cunninger than I;

And he strolls abroad at ease !—But I'll bring
you to your knees

By the stranger, direr hell-broth I will try,

Varus ! Hasten back you shall, and your soul
be brought in thrall, 75

By no hackneyed incantations, to my bower.

I will mix a deadlier draught : yea, a deadlier
shall be quaffed

By the spirit that in scorn defies my power.

Ay, and sooner shall the sky 'neath the floor
of ocean lie, [80

And the earth be stretched a canopy above,
Than you for me shall fail—as bitumen
through the veil

Of its smoke is quenchless flame—to burn
in love !"

Then the hapless boy, no more begging mercy
as before

Of the devilish hags with humble plea and
prayer,—

Pausing but to find a curse than the ban of
Atreus worse, 85
Hurled his malison upon the shuddering
air :

“ There's no damnèd drug so strong that the
laws of Right and Wrong
From their course, like plans of men, there-
by are driven.
My curse shall dog you ever : flame of sacrifice
shall never
Expiate the maledictions heard in heaven. 90

Nay, when thus condemned to death I have
gasped away my breath,
I will haunt you still, a demon of the
night ;
And my ghost with talon-nail your faces shall
assail.
Ay, the Gods of Hell shall make you feel
their might !

For, with horror-stricken breast by my night-
mare weight oppressed, 95
You shall start from troubled sleep, and
sleep no more.

And the mob with volleyed sleet of their
stones from street to street,
Filthy hags, shall drive you down to Hades'
door.

And, for burial, where you fall shall the
wolves hold carnival,

And the vultures of the Esquiline shall
rend : 100

And my parents, living on—woe is me !—when
I am gone,
Shall with bitter exultation see your end !"

VI.

A CHALLENGE to a "*Grub-street*" satirist, who
assailed only those from whom he had nothing to
fear.

HA! you cur, and do you fly at the harm-
less passer-by,

And drop your tail at wolves, and take to
flight?

Turn your yapping, if you can, and your
snapping, on a *man*!

Snap at me, and I'll give you bite for bite!

Like a boar-hound, as compared with you, or
tawny-haired 5

Shepherd's friend, ay, a wolf-hound staunch
and good,

With every sense alive, through the snows
I'll track and drive.

Unswerving aye, the robbers of the wood.

You—while yet with your soul-shaking yelp
the forest trees are quaking,

Turn to sniff where a thief has dropped a
bone.

Have a care, man, have a care! 'Ware the
horns! I never spare

Knaves, ready aye, as many a knave has
known.

I can write like him who gave for broken
troth a grave,¹

Or like him who dealt the sculptor such
annoy.²

1. Neobule was betrothed to Archilochus, but at her father's instance, jilted him. The poet avenged himself in such stinging lampoons, that father and daughter hanged themselves.

2. Bupalus the sculptor executed a caricature of Hipponax the poet, who "stuck that flea to the wa'" with his pen.

of Horace.

27

What if vicious mongrels yap about my heels,
and snap?—

Shall I whimper like a helpless little boy?

VII.

A PROTEST against civil war, written either in 41 B.C. when there was fighting in the north of Italy, or in 38 B.C., when a struggle in Sicily began.



HITHER rush ye, ah whither, on pathways of slaughter?

Why from its sheath must your hands
pluck the sword?

Has blood not enough o'er the earth, o'er the
water—

Blood of our kinsmen of Latium—been
poured?

Not that our Romans in wide conflagration
May level proud Carthage's towers with
the plain,

Not that the Britons, the masterless nation,
 May pass down the Triumph-way, wearing
 our chain.

Nay, but 'tis even as Parthians pray ever,
 That Rome by her own hand, our own
 Rome, may bleed! 10
 Not wolves are so ruthless, nor lions: they
 never
 Rend in their rage save an alien breed.

Is it blind madness, or fate overpowering,
 Or is it sin in you?—answer, I say! [15
 Silent, with faces all pale, they stand cowering,
 Men conscience-stricken, in 'wildered dis-
 may!

So is it: us to our doom Fate is calling:
 Fratricide-guilt ever beckons away,
 Since the life-blood of Remus the innocent,
 falling
 Earthward, made cursed our descendants
 for aye. 20

IX.

*PROBABLY written on shipboard on the morning of the
day of Actium.*

WHEN shall we drink to Cæsar's victory
In that rare wine for festal days
Stored, in your stately mansion, you and I,
Dear friend, by heaven's grace,

While blent with flutes rings music of the
lyre,—

One Dorian, one the Phrygian mood,—
As when that pirate fled, his fleet on fire,
His sea-god father's flood?

He threatened Rome with chains—chains filed
away
From traitor slaves by him, their friend! 10

Rome's soldiers now—" 'Tis false !" our sons
will say—

Enslaved to a woman bend ;

For her bear shield and trenching-palisade :

To obey her eunuchs' hest they stoop !

The sun mid standards casts a shameful
shade,

15

Where gauzy curtains droop.

Chafing thereat, two thousand Gallic horse

Turned rein, with shouts of " Cæsar, hail !"

Skulks in yon port to left the foes' sea-force

Sullenly, with furled sail.

20

Hail, Triumph, hail ! Why linger golden car

And kine that never yoke may know ?

Hail ! no such chief thou ledd'st home from
the war

That brought Jugurtha low ;

Not him whose prowess reared to his renown

A cenotaph where Carthage stood. [25

Vanquished by sea, by land, our foe lays
down
Red cloak for sable-hued.

Where is he now?—to hundred-citied Crete
Fled, battling sore with tempest-stress? 30
Or yawn the storm-vext Syrtes round his
fleet?
Or drifts he havenless?

Bring, steward, wine; in some more generous
bowl
Chian and Lesbian bring to me!—
Nay, Caecuban, more potent to control 35
These qualms that rise as heaves the sea.
Cares, fears for Cæsar's cause that haunt my
soul,
At Bacchus' touch shall flee.

X.

THIS Maevius, a poetaster, whose departure from the shores of Italy receives such a cordial "send-off," was (with his equally objectionable friend Bavius) the pet aversion of both Horace and Virgil.

HER anchor's weighed ! she's gone, with
a curse to waft her on,

As she bears the stinkard Maevius from
our sight !

O South-wind, as she rides o'er the waters,
lash her sides

With your crested billows, on the left and
right.

May the East-wind black with clouds hurl her
shattered oars and shrouds
Adrift adown the yawning gulfs of seas !

5

May the North-wind rise in might, as on the
mountain's height

He rives and rends the shuddering oak-trees!

May no star with friendly beam through the
midnight blackness gleam

Where lowering sinks Orion in the wave! 10

May the sea he drifteth o'er be no calmer
than of yore

When Greece's host triumphant homeward
drave,

When, from Ilium's fortress burned, her
anger Pallas turned

On Ajax and his sacrilegious sail!

Oh how sweat your crew and bawl, as at sheet
and spar they haul! 15

Oh your green-and-yellow visage!—oh, so
pale!

Oh your whimpering and your squealing, un-
manly wretch, as kneeling

You cry to Jove, who turns away in scorn,

When Ionia's gulf is roaring with the East-
wind, rains are pouring,
And the keel is by the surge asunder
torn. 20

But if only by some bay you shall lie, a dainty
prey
For the cormorants that rend your prostrate
form,
A wanton goat we'll slay, and a lamb, on that
glad day
Of thanksgiving, to the Spirits of the
Storm.

XI.

CONFESSIONS and reminiscences, which help us to understand, as Horace apparently never could, why the objects of his affections were so inconstant.

NY boy, I have no heart to write (I did
so once—I know it).

Vers de Société, for Love has shot your budding poet—

Love, which beyond all men annoys your
friend, and makes him burn

With passion for the blooming boys and winsome girls in turn.

Yon woodlands' fading glory dates my cure,
as I remember,

Of madness for Inachia—yes, 'tis now the
third December.

Oh me! through Rome—I blush for shame
that such a fool I was—

A perfect byword I became! At dinners,
like an ass,

I wore my heart upon my sleeve, with listless
air and dismal,

And silence, broken but by sighs heaved up
from depths abysmal. 10

“Must honest poverty be now,” I'd cry, “of
no avail

Compared with filthy lucre?”—how I bored
you with my wail,

Soon as the god who casts out shame in all
my veins made summer,

And made me blurt out all my secret thoughts
to each chance-comer!

"Oh if," I cried, "the rage that glows with-
in my breast break free, 15
And fling to every wind that blows each
bootless remedy,—

Each 'poultice' of my grievous wound, that
cannot ease its paining,—

My pride shall quit the lists : my rivals merit
but disdaining !"

I stood before you, and with high stern mien
I vaunted so :

"Go home, dear boy," you would reply. My
wavering steps would go 20

Back to the same ungracious doors, the
thresholds pity-lacking.

Oh me ! my bones ache now as I recall that
bivouacking !

Now all is changed : Lyciscus' face, proud
vanquisher of all

The girls in soft voluptuous grace, is holding
me its thrall ;

And no remonstrances of friends,—so loyal,
so outspoken !—

25

Nor scoff nor scorn of those fair lips, as yet
my chains hath broken.

Well ! some new passion shall destroy the
old—for maiden fair,

Or for some graceful-moulded boy who loops
up floating hair.

XIII.

AN invitation, with which we may compare Milton's
Sonnet xx—"Lawrence, of virtuous father vir-
tuous son."

THE tempest is howling, the heavens are
scowling : the rains descend,
And the snows drift by, till the earth and
the sky are as one : in the blast
The sea-surge is moaning, the forest is groan-
ing. Let us seize, friend,
While yet it is day, what chances we may,
ere our youth be past,
Ere its grace have vanished. Grim eld be
banished with clouded brow. 5
Bring us wine that shall date us the year of
Torquatus, when I was born.

No talk of vexations! With gracious mutations shall Heaven, I trow,

Right all that is wrong. For the perfumes

I long of the Land of the Morn—

With these to glisten, the while, as I listen to harps that ring,

My breast grows light as my cares take flight, and their terrors flee. 10

So the Centaur of story to him whom for glory he fostered did sing :

“O mightiest one of mortals, thou son of the Queen of the Sea,

The Morning-land bideth thy coming, where glideth Scamander, where stray

His cool waters and brown, where Simois down slideth smooth to the main.

But the Sisters of Dooming, the while thine home-coming they span, brake away 15

That thread ; nor the Foam-goddess unto thine home shall waft thee again.

There then do thou borrow surcease from
thy sorrow with wine-cup and lay ;
For a spell is in these that whispereth peace
from the heart's sick pain."

XIV.

THE gods not having made Maecenas poetical, he could not be brought to understand that the fount of inspiration is not perennial. Horace, having to find some excuse for what is of Philistines accounted idleness, furnishes that which is most likely to be believed.



WHY self-indulgent laziness should so
completely steep

My senses in forgetfulness, and put the Muse
to sleep,

As if, to slake a quenchless thirst that parched
my gullet dry,

I'd drunk a bumper sleeping-draught—you
daily ask me why.

O my loyal friend, you'll be

With your "whys," the death of me! 5

Of course it is the God of Love who stops the
Muse's way.

The poems long begun,

Long promised, never done—

I cannot put the final polish on a single lay !

I'm not the first : Anacreon singed, they say,
his poet-wings

At Cupid's torch ; and still the wail through
all his music rings 10

That thrilled of old along the chords that
sobbed in woodnotes wild

His passion of despairing love for Samos'
beauteous child.

In like unhappy case

Are you : no fairer face,

I grant you, burnt the topless towers of Ilion
long ago.

Happy man ! A pert soubrette

Has caught me in her net ; 15

And I'm wasting to a shadow—she has two
strings to her bow !

XV.

To a coquette—perhaps the first of the great enchantresses who (temporarily) changed the bard's wholesome heart to gall, and, in spite of his disdain, did win renown of him. There is ample evidence in the Odes that he tasted, once and again, the sweets of the revenge he here threatens.



IGHT—and in a windless sky rode the
radiant moon on high

In the midst of her attendant starry train,
When to me you plighted troth, repeating
after me the oath—

Yet you meant to take the Gods' names in
vain ! [5

And as oak is by ivy enclasped, lost love,

Your arms clung close; and you swore,

“I'll be true, long as sheep fear the wolf;

long as leap

The billows when winter winds roar ;

Long as summer breeze caresses Apollo's
flowing tresses,

I'll be true, will render love for love to
thee!" 10

O Neaera, you shall rue it! By my manly
soul, I'll do it!—

Or else there's not a spark of man in me!
I will see not a rival have all, lost
love,

That was mine. There are fairer
and truer:

And the heart that has loved you, and
traitress proved you, 15
Stoops not to your beauty's lure.

And you, my favoured rival crowing now
"I'm the survival

Of the fittest!"—since I'm left out in the
cold;—

Though your flocks be past the telling, and
your rent-roll ever swelling, [20
Though everything you touch turn to gold;

Be you wise with the wisdom of old,
poor fool,

Be you fair as the fairest of men,—

Ha ! you yet shall have reason to weep
for her treason,

While I laugh—'Twill be my turn
then !

XVI.

PROBABLY written, like vii, when Horace could see nothing but calamity in civil strife, and had not learnt, as in i and ix, to trust in the star of Octavianus Cæsar.

 COURGES of civil dissension now lash
us, the new generation,
And Rome by her own strength is falling
ruin-banned,
For whose overthrowing prevailed not her
neighbours, the Marsian nation,
Nor Tuscan Porsena with vainly threaten-
ing hand ;
She whom Capua's rivalry could not destroy,
neither Spartacus' daring, 5
No, nor the Gallic rebel's doubly traitorous
sword ;

She who quailed not from Germany's brood
 with their blue eyes savagely glaring,
 Nor stooped to Hannibal by mothers all-
 abhorred :—

Rome her unnatural sons blood-tainted to ruin
 are bringing :

Wild beasts again for lairs shall choose the
 soil of Rome : 10

Aliens triumphant shall trample her ashes :
 with hoof-strokes ringing

The horsemen of our foes shall spurn the
 ancient home.

And the bones of Quirinus, from wind and
 from sun covered close through the ages,
 Shall be—oh sight accurst !—flung wide
 with brutal laugh.

Where shall a haven be found from the
 tempest around us that rages, 15
 Seek ye, my countrymen ?—or ye, their
 nobler half ?

Let this be our counsel of counsels :—as
when, after dread oath taken,
The people of Phocaea left their Asian
home,
Fled from their lands, from the hearths of
their fathers, their temples, forsaken
For boars to dwell therein, for ravening
wolves to roam ;— 20

Let us go, whither fortune may guide, whither
over the surges the finger
Of wild South-west or West wind beckons
us away.
Thus are ye minded ? Hath any aught better
to counsel ? Why linger
To haste aboard the ship in this the ac-
cepted day ?

But first let us swear—“ When stones from
the depths of the sea up-swimming 25
Return, be our return forfended by no ban ;

And let not our consciences smite us, as home-
ward-bound we are trimming

The sails, when Po shall lave hill-crests
Apulian ;

When towering out of the sea rise Apennine's
forest-battalions ;

When love unnatural shall in monstrous
bonds unite 30

Beast unto beast, when the stag with the
tigress shall wanton in dalliance,

And when the dove shall take for paramour
the kite ;

When the herds shall be trustful, their dread
of the tawny lion have vanished,

And goats shall gleam in scales, and love
the briny sea."

Take we these oaths, yea, all by which hope
of return shall be banished, 35

Then one and all go forth, an exiled nation
we—

Or all save the dullard mob : the fearful and
unbelieving

May still, a craven rout, on beds unhallowed
lie.

Ye, who have hearts heroic, away with un-
manly grieving !

Aboard ! with woven wings by shores
Etruscan fly ! 40

Us Ocean awaiteth, the girdler of earth : let
us seek, on-sailing,

The fields of Paradise, the Islands of the
Blest,

Where yearly the soil without tillage bestow-
eth the harvests unfailing,

Where blossoms aye the vine by pruner's
knife undressed :

The olive shoot burgeons, the husbandman's
trust it betrayeth never : 45

Dark-emerald figs begem the trees ungraft-
ed there :

Out of the holm-oak's hollow the gold of the
comb drips ever :

With tinkling foot the rill leaps down its
mountain stair.

There to the pails unbidden the milch-goats
come in the gloaming :

For love the heifer comes full-uddered to
the byre. 50

They hear not at even the growl of the bear
round the sheepfold roaming ;

Nor earth with viper-nests swells up in hill-
ocks dire :

No murrain e'er blasteth the flock, no dog-star
fierily-gleaming

Beats on the herd, with fury parching
every vein.

Yea, in blissful surprise shall we note how
never the waterfloods, streaming 55

From clouds the East-wind chases, scourge
the sodden plain :

Nor there mid the dry clods parched are the
seeds, once fatness-teeming ;
For still the King of Heaven there tempers
sun and rain.

Hitherward rowed by her heroes never came
Argo racing ;
The shameless dame of Colchis never trod
its strand : 60
Never shipmen of Sidon came hither, their
yards on the new tack bracing :
Ulysses' toil-worn crew ne'er touched at
that blest land.

Jupiter veiled those shores, and reserved for a
godfearing nation,
When he with brass-alloy debased the Age
of Gold—
With brass : but with iron yet harder his
wrath made each generation : 65
The way to 'scape wherefrom my prophet-
lips have told.

XVII.

HORACE feigns himself vanquished by the "witch" he has libelled, but in his recantation he ingeniously repeats, or makes her repeat, all that he has ever laid to her charge.

HORACE.

YIELD, I yield! your wisdom's all-
 prevailing might I own!
 In lowly suppliance I fall—by Proserpina's
 throne,
 And by Diana's majesty which none may dare
 assail,
 And by the scrolls of gramarye whose wizard-
 chants avail
 To pluck the stars from heaven's floor, and
 call them from on high,

Spare, O Canidia, I implore, your incantation-
cry :

And bid your wheel's soul-wildering whir, O
bid it backward run !

Bethink you, Telephus could stir to pity
Thetis' son,¹

Though he defiantly had led his Mysians to
the field

Against him, and his lance had sped against
Achilles' shield. 10

Troy's matrons poured the anointing oil where
slain the slayer lay,

Though Hector had been doomed the spoil of
dogs, the vultures' prey,

Since that dark hour which saw him pass
without her walls, and low

Fall at Achilles' feet—alas, an unrelenting
foe !

1. Achilles wounded Telephus, king of Mysia, as he withstood the Greeks' landing at Troy; but afterwards gave him, as the only salve for the wound, some rust from his spear.

As drops a vesture when ye strip, the boar's
tough bristled hide 15

Fell from the rowers of thy ship, Ulysses
travail-tried,

When Circe's will revoked the ban : then in-
tellect and speech

Came back, and dignity of man shone in the
face of each.

Oh, I have been requited, far above my guilt,
by you

O lady-love of every tar, of all the pedlar-
crew. 20

My bloom of youth on wings has flown, my
rose of modesty

Has faded : I am skin and bone, a gruesome
sight to see.

The infernal stench of your witch-oils has
turned my hair to snow.

Tired—tired, as though with endless toils, nor
rest nor ease I know.

Night thrusts day on, and day thrusts by the
night, nor yet to me 25

Is given to ease by one deep sigh my heart's
pent agony.

A vanquished wretch, I own the thing that I
denied so long,

That through a rebel breast can ring the Sa-
bine demon-song,

That hymns of Marsian wizardry a rebel head
can rive.

What would you more than this? O sea! O
earth! I burn alive 30

In torment such as never came to Hercules,
with blood

Of Nessus venom-smeared; nor flame of that
Sicanian flood

Of quenchless fire in Etna glows so fierce!
But you, till I

Am tossed to every wind that blows, a pinch
of ashes dry,

Are busy still, you factory of drugs and
witches' brew! 35

How shall this end? What penalty must I
pay yet to you?

Speak out ! in fullest faith I wait to pay the
heavy price,

Prepared my sin to expiate. Shall it be
sacrifice

Of five-score steers ? Or shall my lyre—O
what a liar !—thus

Twang out the praise you so desire—"O
chaste ! O virtuous ! 40

You pace, a star of purest gold, mid common
stars plebeian !"

Castor, who chafed indignant-souled at lines
Stesichorean

That libelled Helen—chafed the might of
Pollux also—hearkened

To prayer, and straight restored their sight to
poet-pupils darkened.

You too (for O, you can !) heal now my poor
distracted brain ! 45

Your father's dirty tricks, I'll vow, have left
on you no stain.

No hag are you whose practised spade brings
paupers resurrection,

When scarce has nine days' mourning paid
the debt of kin's affection.¹

Your bosom's kind—nay, *liberal*: your hands
are undefiled:

An honest wife you are—of course it was your
lawful child. 50

All was *en règle*, the nurse says. True, there
wasn't much seclusion:

But what's a miracle to you?—and what a
constitution!

CANIDIA.

How dare you whine your prayers to ears
closed fast as bolted door?

Not rocks to naked mariners are deafer, when,
with roar

Of winter winds, the thunderous blows beat
of unfathomed seas. 55

1. Nine days was the prescribed period of mourning, concluded by a sacrifice and supper. Experience had shown that, after this perfunctory discharge of duty, the grave was thenceforth unvisited by the bereaved, and so the body-snatchers might feel secure.

Shall you unpunished, you, expose Cotytte's
mysteries,

And laugh, and sacred rites deride of Free
Love the divine,

And blab, with all an expert's pride, of witch-
craft Esquiline,

And rue not to have made the town ring with
Canidia's name?

What profits, then, the gold paid down to
many a gipsy dame? 60

What use to have brewed me potions, strong
to chain, and swift to slay?

Ha! for swift death you'll pray! But long,
full long, shall be delay!

Slow shall your loathed life ebb away; and
this your doom shall be,

To be the victim day by day of some fresh
agony.

As yearn for rest lost souls in pain, as per-
jured Pelops' father, 65

Old Tantalus, for aye shall strain at fruit he
may not gather;

As longs for rest Prometheus sore, chained to
a vulture aye,

As Sisyphus longs evermore that stone at last
to lay

At rest upon the mountain's crown—the laws
of Jove deny ;—

You too shall yearn to cast you down from
towers now, and die, 70

And now, in that false heart to hide the whet-
ted Noric sword.

Around your throat all vainly tied shall coil
the hempen cord.

By melancholy-madness crazed, your life
you'll loathe and scorn.

Then I, on necks of foes upraised, in triumph
shall be borne ;

And all the world shall cringe beneath my
haughty tyranny. 75

Shall I, who thrill with life and breath the
waxen image, I

(As well you know, Sir Prying-eyes) whose
chanted spells are strong

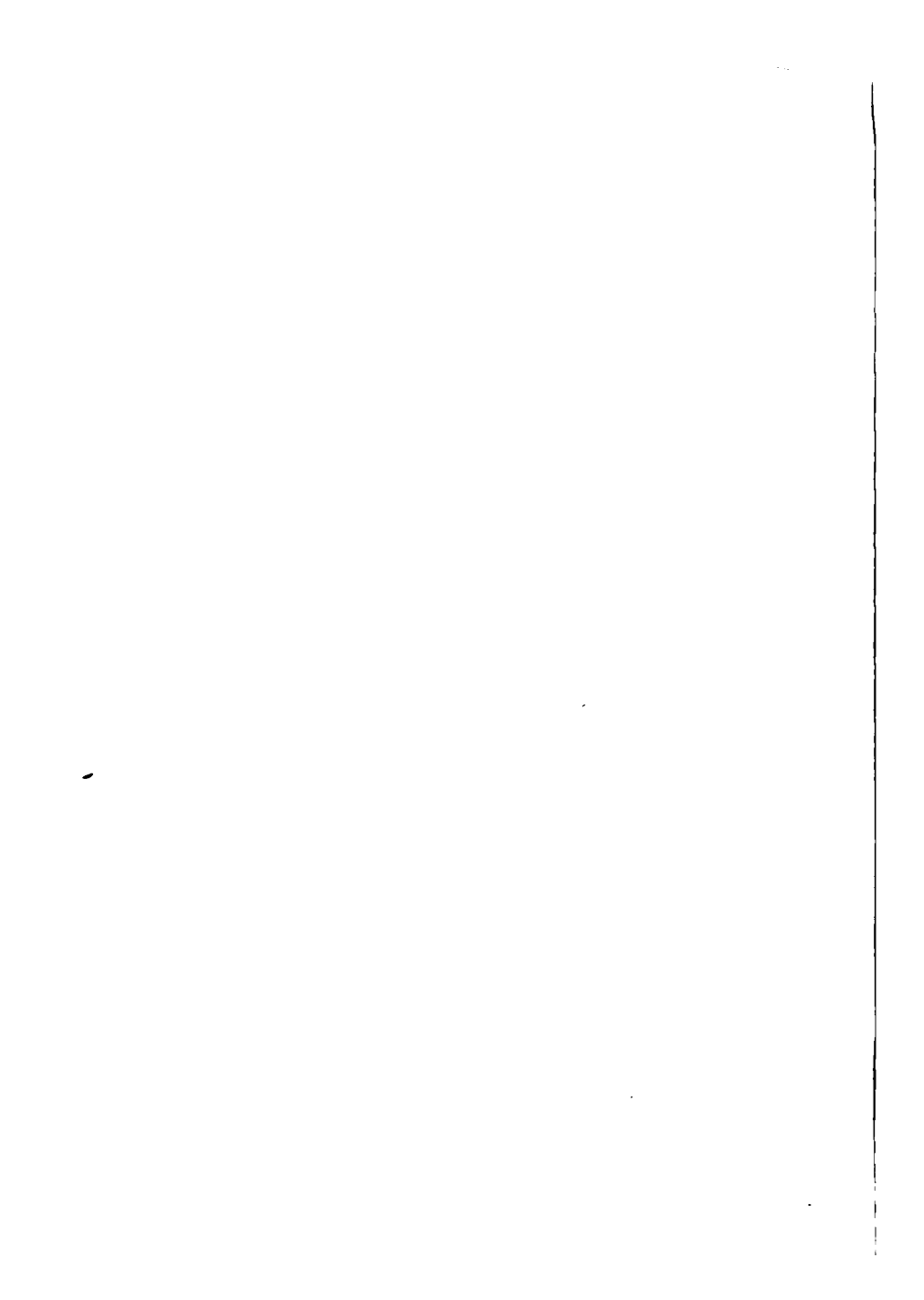
To pluck the moon from midnight skies by
incantation-song,—

I, who call up the parted soul, on wings of fire
that flew,

I, who mix Love's soul-quelling bowl, the
magic philtre-brew,— 80

Wail that my art has no control o'er such a
thing as you ?

THE END.



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